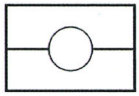
HOW TO GROW
A GUERILLA GARDEN

Hey!

This zine has been created by the Guerrilla Gardening Naarm Collective, and has been designed to share with you the wonderful world of guerrilla gardening. We have included information about how you too can start your own guerrilla garden or commons, and the values and organising structures underpinning our collective. Inside you will also find various additions from folks in the collective, including writing pieces, stories and a crafty DIY project to get you inspired!

We encourage you to use our values and organising structures as inspiration but take into account your context when creating your own structures and gardens.

The Guerrilla Gardening Naarm Collective operates on the unceded lands of the Wurundjeri Woi-wurrung people of the Kulin Nation. We acknowledge the Traditional Owners of the land on which we are working and that their sovereignty was never ceded.



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What is Guerilla Gardening Naarm?

Guerilla Gardening Naarm is a network of guerilla gardens in so called Naarm/ Melbourne. We occupy unused state or council land, using it to grow food and create community spaces. The gardens, or the commons are free and open to anyone to grow food and organise within using non hierarchical grassroots organising structures. We have a network of these gardens which all host weekly working bees where we build, plant, grow and harvest, as well as running political discussion spaces, workshops and community events.

The project aims to respond to the escalating cost-of-living and climate crises by creating localised food systems that do not rely on industry or the state. Inequalities plague existing food systems; they actively create obstacles to accessing fresh healthy food. The garden aims to create a grassroots alternative to these systems and promote the power of community collaboration and solidarity in meeting our needs.

The collective intends to discard colonial ideas of land ownership and instead practice ideas of collective care for and equal access to land, embodying the concept of 'the commons'.

Organising Structure

Guerrilla Gardening Naarm Collective is currently made up of three existing guerrilla gardens operating in Naarm; Radicle Roots Commons, Bracken Creek Commons and The GROVE (Grassroots Organic Vegetable Explosion).
By joining together as a collective, we are able to collaborate on values, resources and skills. Each garden embodies the GGN ethos with its own flare and diversity, and the collective is growing!

Guerrilla Gardening Naarm Collective:

- Meets every 4 months with elected delegates from each garden to connect and collaborate, share what is going well, as well as what support is needed and where.
- Makes wider decisions about resources, social media, organising structure, finances, community engagement, community defence, solidarity and more.

Local Gardens:

- Meet individually for regular meetings to discuss visions and needs specific to their context.
- Organise events, working bees, discussion spaces at the gardens.
- Connect new members, upskill and offer support to anyone wanting to get involved in the project.

All roles adopted within the collective including meeting delegates, social media coordinator, facilitators and minute takers for meetings are all rotational. This is to eliminate informal hierachies developing within the collective as much as possible, and to upskill the collective through our organsing.

We operate our meetings with a non hierachical structure using consensus based decision making with a super majority back up.

This is to ensure everyone interested in organising the gardens has the opportunity to have their voice heard.

Finances:
Finances are all fundraised through the community. No one in the collective is paid for their work, the funds are for collective resources.

Online Communication:
Group Chats:
The gardens have online community chats which are open to the community. These chats are where events are shared, gardening questions are asked and much lively conversation is had!
Social Media:
All the gardens in the collective share the one instagram page which we co manage: @guerillagardening_naarm
Blog:
ggnfederation.noblogs.org

How Consensus Decision making works:

Guerrilla Gardening Naarm Values

Always was, always is, always will be

Anywhere we create gardens on this continent, we acknowledge we are growing food on stolen land. For thousands of years prior to colonisation these lands have been deeply connected to, cared for and cultivated. For 250 years there has been ongoing connection and fierce resistance to colonialism and capitalism's disastrous destruction of local food systems and the enclosing of common land. We are on the stolen lands of the Wurrundjeri, Woi Wurrung people of the Kulin nations. We pay our deepest respects to all knowledge holders in First Nations communities, Elders and spirits of the waterways, skies, plants, animals and the land.

No bosses - non hierarchical and community led

We believe that we can work as a community to address our own needs. Hierarchical decision making lacks consent. We use consensus to make decisions. Using consent to make decisions makes us stronger, more creative and more resilient. We do not allow harmful and dominating behaviour in our organising and gardening. Additionally, no bosses means no external bosses. We don't collaborate with councils, cops or corporations. We are aware of informal hierarchies developing through organizing and constantly strive to break them down. Value to the collective is not judged on people's work contributed.

Mistakes are welcome

Gardening and grassroots organising are experiences in learning. We do not expect, nor uphold perfection. It is expected and encouraged that we will make mistakes through our time in this space. This is okay and a useful tool for learning. Experimenting in community is valuable.

Solidarity

The collective is connected to a broader network of social change and community led resistance projects. We aim to connect with and stand in solidarity with direct action and mutual aid networks on this continent and globally. We welcome invites of collaboration, support and the space is for all to use in alignment with the outlined values.

This garden belongs to all of us, we are all welcome if we all welcome each other. We oppose the existence of colonial property and borders and any oppression and discrimination such as racism and bigotry that comes along with such.

Food should be free

We resist the commodification of food systems and dream of a world in which everyone's basic needs are met no matter what. Our gardens have no membership fees, no leases and no plot fees. The food is not for sale, it is free to take and the gardens are 100% volunteer run.

The commodification and costs of food as a basic need has been weaponized by capitalism and states. Food prices are arbitrary numbers manipulated by market capitalism to bring profit to big business giants like woolworths whilst ripping off farmers, distribution workers and consumers. We reject these systems of oppression and are working towards a world where food is local and accessible.

To be truly radicle…

Andy Paine

Put roots down. Like a strong tree, be fully grounded in the place where you are and with the others around you. Be someone others can rely on and who is aware of and contributing to the world around them. Know your roots. Every plant began as the seed of another. Knowing where we have come from helps us to understand our present and imagine our future.

Have strong roots. Don't be blown around by the winds of fashion or confusion. After a drought or fire, a tree with strong roots can revitalise. Even on the most inhospitable ground, a plant can survive if it knows what it really needs and what it doesn't.

Have healthy roots. A plant with good roots can survive anything, but nothing kills a plant quicker than root disease. Remember what's unseen is always more important than what's on display.

Connect your roots to others. Every plant grows as part of an ecosystem. Roots connect to mycelium in the soil to get the nutrients they need. No one exists in isolation, our lives intrinsically affect and are affected by others.

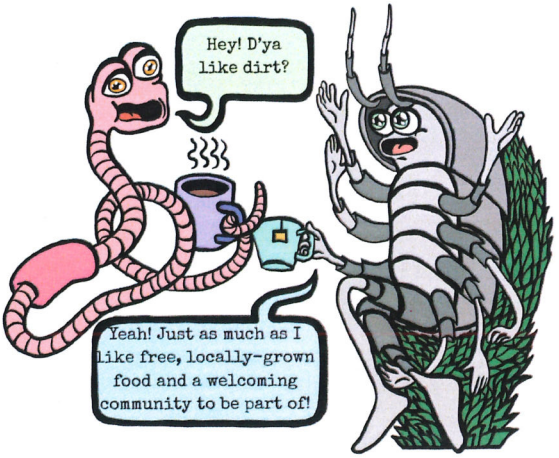
Have roots that give as well as take. At the same time as roots take on nutrients, they are holding the soil beneath them together. As they draw moisture from the soil, they transpire it into the sky to create rain. As they take carbon dioxide from the air, they put out oxygen for others to breathe. Benefiting yourself and benefiting others are not mutually exclusive.

And when something's not working, when the system's broken? You've got to pull it up by the roots.

How to grow a guerrilla garden

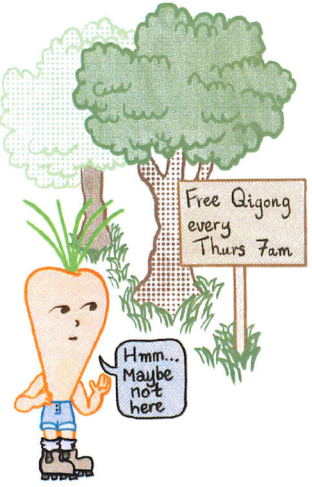
So you want to grow a guerrilla garden...?

Step 1: Find some friends who also like growing food... or at least are keen to try!



Step 2: Find a potential site and do your homework!

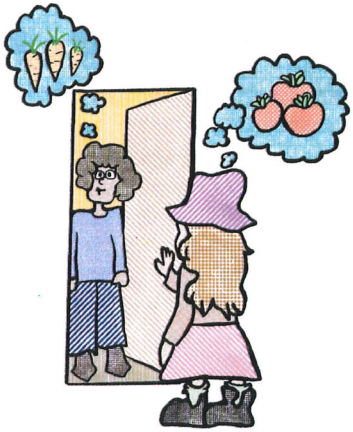
Remember that we are on stolen land. Remember and learn about the history of the site. Where possible, speak to First Nations people, check in with them about the project.



<u>Community consultation</u>

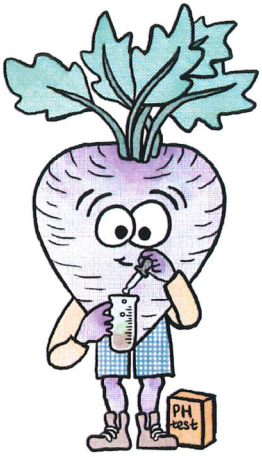
There are many ways this can be done, you will know best what will work best within your local context

- Talk to people about the history of the land, what has it been used for in the past i.e industrial uses, agriculture etc.
- Ask how frequently the site is used and what it is used for. If the site is very busy it would be best to choose a less popular area. E.g a soccer oval or popular picnic site would cause issues with community members and council



What do people think about a garden here? What would they vision for a garden, what would they like to see grown? How could the garden meet their needs and be most accessible for the community?

- Examples of how to do this would be through door knocking, flyers, posters, questionnaires.
- Use discretion to determine how much detail to provide during this process to avoid being dobbed into council before you've even begun!



Observing the site

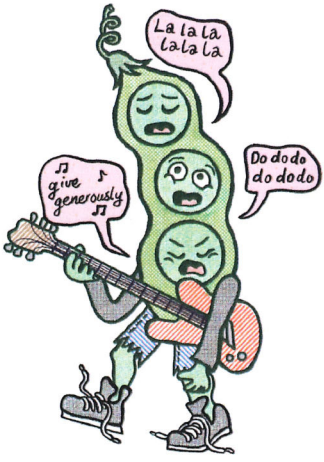
- Soil test your site in multiple spots. If soil is contaminated, fear not! Raised beds are a good option. If it is not contaminated (yay!), sheet mulching is a low cost method of building up beds and is what Radicle Roots & Bracken Creek Commons used
- Observe the site at multiple times of day, multiple days of the week. How much sun (important!) does the sight get, is the space used for weekend sports etc?
- Water: where can you get to the council water outlets? If you have energy and no water outlet it would be cool to see some guerrilla gardeners experiment with water tanks.
- What is the local ecology like? If you plant seeding/spreading crops will they become weeds for this area? E.g., fennel by a creek.

- Notice the direction of the wind, is it strong? Do you need windbreaks?
- Topography: look at the lay of the land, is it flat, sloped, in a ditch? Where is the best spot to grow?

Step 3: Getting ready, gathering resources, and organising install day

Funding:

The most expensive part of building a garden is the initial purchasing of soil and compost. We made a chuffed link (fundraising website) and asked our loved ones to chip in a bit. To the best of our memory the compost and soil was approximately $400 for 5m3 in 2023. Since then we have had a couple of fundraisers but haven't had many expenses.



Fundraising ideas we've had success with include bush dances, film screenings, and house parties.

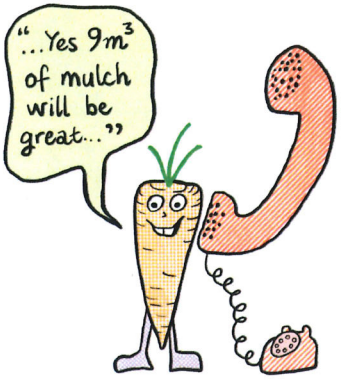
Soil and compost:
You will need to order soil to be delivered to the site on the install day. We used a mix of soil and compost, however if this is not available to you, you will also need to order compost separately.

Seedlings:
Propagate seedlings or ask your local nursery if they will donate some seconds.

Cardboard:
Start collecting cardboard enough for the size of the site you have three times over. A great place to get cardboard is from the bins out the back of large electronic stores or bike shops. If you have the choice opt for cardboard with as little ink/tape/plastic as possible, cause you will have to strip all this off

Storage:
If you want a fence or storage, it's good to organise this early. We used an old school locker and a big tool box for our storage.

Fencing:
A note on fencing. Fences are optional. We chose to put one up at first because we thought it might be a concern that dogs would run through the garden. We currently don't have a fence as the garden is established and we haven't had many canine run-ins. Other reasons for fencing might be possums (or rabbits), but you need to build special fences to keep those home-boys out. Finally if you are thinking of using star pickets please (!!!!) put yellow star picket covers over their exposed end. This is so council can't rip out your garden on the grounds of *safety*.

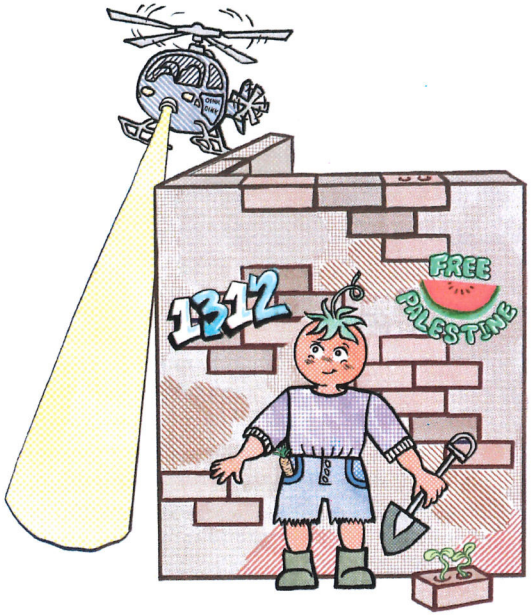


Mulch:

Call local arborists and ask if they can drop off their mulch near the site, most arborists will do this for free. In Naarm there's a facebook group where arborists connect with local people to drop off mulch (it's a waste product to them that they usually have to pay to dispose of) Alternatively, visit your local free mulch pile - preferably with a trailer or ute.

Step 4: Creating the garden!

1. Mow the grass if necessary
2. Lay down 3 layers of cardboard, with extra around the edges (with sticky tape taken off)
3. Lay a thick layer of mulch over the cardboard, this will suppress weeds from coming into the garden
4. Water in the cardboard and mulch
5. Measure out the beds and pathways and mark them out with builders line
6. Shovel soil onto/into beds
7. Plant your seedlings
8. Water
9. Maintain!



Reimagining Alternatives - Food Sovereignty and The Commons

Bella

The dispossession of peoples from their capacity to have food sovereignty is a part of the machine driving colonialism, imperialism and capitalism. Food and land autonomy are a direct threat to states and empires. Hence, the struggle for food sovereignty cannot be waged in isolation from the broader interconnected struggle against the powers that be, and the fight for a new world.

Colonisation on this continent brought an attempted destruction of First Nations peoples' food practices. Prior to colonisation, peoples hunted, managed grasslands for grain production, foraged for edible and medicinal flora, and used controlled burns to cultivate the land and attract game. First Nations peoples developed complex food systems, such as Budj Bim Eel Trapping, and the Murnong, a yam daisy that was cultivated in vast fields in the south east of the continent using fire stick farming. These food practices nourished and sustained people for millenia, in a reciprocal relationship of care with the earth.

Colonisation removed peoples off their traditional lands, and set up a foreign agricultural industry. The new economy became dependent on cattle and wool,and later cropping and dairying. These new systems asserted the colonial narrative of the white settler Australian farmer, attacking traditional knowledge systems and practices. Settler farming was a driving force of frontier expansion and massacres.

Through dispossession and forced assimilation, First Nations peoples were denied access to traditional lands, knowledge systems and food practices. Traditional foods were replaced first by government controlled rations, and then to new imposed western foods, which were high in sugar, fatty meats and salt. In remote areas, where Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islanders represent 45% of the population, fresh food is often less accessible, and healthy food can cost up to 50% more in remote areas compared to capital cities. This has led to a higher prevalence of diet related chronic diseases, such as type 2 diabetes and cardiovascular diseases. These diseases have been shown to be higher in Indigenous populations living in remote areas compared with those in capital cities. These structures continue the colonial project in so-called Australia today.

These new agricultural systems not only displaced First Nations peoples and knowledge systems, but have had devastating impacts on our environment, and all human and non human life. These systems are dependent on the clearing of habitat, the creation of monocultures, and the use of toxic chemicals which pollute water and soil, kill flora and fauna and destroy ecosystems. Industrial agriculture accounts for 55% of Australia's total land use, 74% of water consumption, and contributes to 18.2% of our greenhouse gas emissions.

By centering industrial agriculture within capitalism and agribusiness, we have allowed a violent global industry to dominate, driving the exploitation of land and peoples for profit above all else, at the expense of the destruction of ecosystems, peoples and cultures.

This centralisation of industry has allowed for the rise of phenomena such as Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO's) and Agro-Technology which allow for the further centralisation and domination of an already over corporatised industry.

In resistance to industrial agriculture, the centralisation of food accessibility and rising food prices, Guerrilla Gardening Naarm have established a network of guerrilla gardens, or common farms.

We establish these commons on unused council land, creating vibrant food growing spaces throughout the city. In doing so, we question and oppose colonial notions of land ownership and private property. Instead, we are practicing collective care for and equal access to land, embodying the concept of the commons whilst taking into account the complexities of this ethos as settlers working on stolen lands.

Not only are the commons the collective resources accessible to and managed by the community. They are also the social relationships of co-operation and solidarity responsible for the sharing of resources and spaces. It is the ways we interact with these resources collectively that creates the commons, this is the act of commoning. The Guerrilla Gardening Naarm commons are free and open to anyone to come down and grow food and organise within.

We know that inequalities within existing food systems actively create obstacles to accessing fresh healthy food. The commodification and costs of food as a basic need has been weaponised by capitalism and states. We reject these systems of oppression, and are working towards a world in which food is no longer weaponized as a tool of the state and corporate elite, but is free, local, and accessible.

This project works to embody and put into practice the politics of food sovereignty and the commons, by practically building alternatives to existing state structures. We understand that the enclosures of the commons were critical in the success of the establishment of capitalism. By working in connection to a broader network of social change, direct action and mutual aid networks, we aim to create a living alternative to dominant systems, and promote the power of community, collaboration and solidarity in meeting our needs.

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Have you ever wondered why we need money? Or why we use money to buy food? There is a use-case for money, that's why it's so popular. It's the exchanging of goods without contracts, the clarification it brings when it valorises labour. It's faster, transferable and mobile, making a transactional process quicker without social conflict or confusion.
There's a clinical disinterestedness inherent in money. No inconvenient conversation or negotiation has to take place about the speculated value in the exchange.
I'm reminded by a scene in a period film set in an old London Zoo where a newly arrived Jamaican immigrant, having been denied in other venues, lines up to the cashier and the cashier busy doing something, not even looking or judging the customer, says, "a shilling or fuck off...".

On a macro-economic scale, according to Adam Smith's concept of the 'Invisible Hand', economics takes on a life of its own. It states that costs and prices are in a state of nature that will self-regulate and gravitate towards reaching an equilibrium. For example, if a jar of mayonnaise is scarce, then the inflated price of mayonnaise goes up. If the prices are up, then the mayonnaise maker gains the capital to make more mayonnaise, maybe even at a lower cost of production (due to high unemployment). At this point, being compelled to make more, the mayonnaise maker decides on pumping them out. When other people see there's money to be made in mayonnaise, they set up their own funky brand of mayo and then the price normalises again because there is too much mayonnaise.

People often mythologise money like it has a life of its own and forget that money is just a clever tool in a social system. A proxy behind social relations. Money is not itself evil. The rupee, the piso, the Laotian kip, Cornish dynar or crypto-currencies weren't born from evil intentions. There is blockchain technology that makes it exponentially faster for banks to transfer money overseas. One of the creators of this blockchain Jed McCaleb left disagreeably and decided to start a new version (peer-based for the unbanked) to bypass the banks entirely. Another cryptocurrency 'Reserve Rights' aims to stabilise the (speculative) shifting value of a currency, taking away the instability of the USD or bitcoin, essentially making it easier and safer for smaller countries with shattered economies to use. Currently, Reserve Rights doesn't rank too well in exchange value compared to the so called 'meme coins' such as Dogecoin which has no use-case whatsoever. The point being that money is driven by humans. Economics are people.

What is evil about money is the same as what's evil about technology. It's alienation; a stick to reach an apple when once upon a time we climbed the tree. Yet it's an obscene form of relational alienation when a hard working farmer decides to multiply apple trees in hundreds of rows on enclosed or stolen land. The apples are picked by exploited migrants and the harvest sent overseas if it fetches a higher price, when once it grew on roadsides to be foraged and free for all or shared, cared for and treated as a commons.

Money is a recent invention and there was a time when it wasn't needed. Long before the Mesopotamians used clay tokens to cleverly redistribute portions of grain about 12,000 years ago, the Ju/'hoansi people of southern Africa had a different way of redistributing food in the community. Being a skilled hunter or forager was such an important role that when they brought food back to the community - there would be cause for celebration. The food that is, not the hunter. Rather than being lauded for their efforts, they would instead be insulted in a practice dubbed 'Insulting the meat'. This was an egalitarian tall-poppy system to keep meritocratic egos in check. The bigger the meat, the bigger the insult.

When people brought food back to their community, there was no urge to speculate on the value of food. It was precious. But not precious in a sense of a scarce resource like diamond or water, but precious in relational obligation. It's what indigenous thinker Tyson Yunkaporta calls a 'dyad', how the individual is connected to the collective and not on opposite ends of a spectrum.

Proponents for the commodification of food find themselves in this spectrum, trying to get by and possibly trying to make it as ethical as possible. Although it still replicates a market system that's only accessible to a privileged few. Community Supported Agriculture or 'CSA' boxes are a great example of trying to reconnect with the communal sense of food reproduction. The customers (likely local and can afford it) share in the risk and investment of food growing, as they pay upfront and support the livelihood of the farmer.
Yet I don't see food production as necessarily being a meritocratic practice. An airline pilot or a heart surgeon understandably, have skills that are exceptional. Food growing (and I do narrow down to fruit and vegetable), is not comparable. People who buy vegetables don't know how surprisingly easy it is to grow them. People who grow vegetables as an occupation should look at gaining capital by teaching people how to grow them. And if there was an obstacle, a difficulty or challenge in growing vegetables, it's not something that should be kept a secret. There are only dubious reasons to keep this confidential and it's not that hard to see why there are obstacles intentionally put in place to make it hard to grow quality produce. Although this may not seem like a good business model, it's a fair model in the business of creating other types of value, perhaps avoiding capitalist tragedy and as a result, building community resilience. Because real community is bad for business.

So why should food be free? An obvious place to start is to make it free for those who don't have it. Who are you to sell water to someone dying of thirst? We need to rethink our relationship with food and stop treating it like designer brands. We need to reshape our built environments to include spaces for the growing of food. We need to rethink how we share it.

To share food, to give food, to serve food, is in our DNA. The real history of human progress and human potential are not rooted in the selfish gene or competition as Darwin or Hobbes had everyone believing, it's the opposite. It's cooperation, relational obligation, respect for the land and mutual aid.

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Gibsy the Guerrilla Garden Fairy

Hi! I'm Gibsy, I live in the Guerrilla Gardens. Well this is my preferred habitat and when I am most active. But there hasn't always been Guerrilla gardens nor the need for them. Back before the gardens my role as GG fairy didn't exist as food was free for everyone and the land was respected. When my ancestors were on this earth there role was to make sure seed was getting spread so that their would be food for the next season, enough to feed the people and the land. However one day things changed, not too long ago actually. On this day foreign people came and started putting fences up in the most weirdest of positions, they would dig them in right through freshly dropped seeds that were due to sprout in the coming spring and build walls across the rivers stopping the flow down STREAM! They would cut down anything in the way of setting up these ugly, barbed wire fences. The day this happened, EVERYTHING changed Grandma says. 'My many generations of seed dispersal fairy ancestor roles were halted. They were forced to stop, they could no longer reach the flowering brassica going to seed, the fenced stopped them from being able to harvest and disperse the seeds on their side of the fence.' Grandma says it was really weird and scary. She says that her and the other fairies had to lay dormant for a while and watch, to try and assess their next steps and this new life.

So, she observed and began to notice something horrible; greed. The food that once fed the people and the land had become commodified, it was barricaded off and left only for those who could hand over these weird bits of paper and coins. and then there were the people within the fence line, they looked STARVING, even though they were surrounded by so much food. They seemed to be working ever so hard and grandma says they couldn't work out why there was so little joy in their faces. Overtime she realised they were being forced by some higher power to work all day and get nothing in return... in some occasions, the tiniest amounts of left overs we given, but that was rare.

Grandma started to wonder where all this food was going if not to the people? So she followed it, first it was packed in trucks and taken to these really big buildings of cement far away to the West. It was then unpacked, moved around a bit, plastic was wrapped around it and then packed back into a truck AGAIN! The truck then made its way to ANOTHER big cement building in the EAST! The food was unpacked and taken inside, where there were heaps of bright lights and flashing signs that made you squirm and hurt your head.

It was then stacked up on top of each other and people would come in and pick and choose, put it in their basket and take it to this counter that blocked the exit. They then had to pass the food back to people in uniforms and they weren't given back the food until they handed some paper and coins over that disappears into some box (where does that box go you ask? probably to some dominating man controlling the peoples food systems). And finally they could leave the shop with some food to cook dinner with. Food that had come from across the other side of the country or even someone else's land!!!

Grandma said it all felt like nonsense to her, she also said that sometimes she saw people walk straight in, put the food in their bag and walk straight out (makes much more sense rather then all this weird handing back and forth). But then, some of these people, would be hunted down, grabbed ever so horribly and threatened, charged and locked up in more ugly cement buildings with even higher fences and the food they took was chucked in the bin, they didn't get any!! They would then be forced to spend all their days in that dark place or sometimes were taken back to the farms and forced to work! See its this whole crazy cycle and the story isn't even finished yet. Grandma also found out that they chuck out about 1/3 of the food into the bins! They don't even eat it, or offer it the people without the paper and coins, nor the farmers who have no joy in their faces, nope! They put it in the bin to rot! Wow I'm getting shivers just talking about it. (but don't worry some people just jump back into the bins and take it straight out, and we have fairies to help with that too, Diva the Dumpster Diving fairy can tell you more).

Anyhow that is the very fast story of my ancestors. So after a lot of investigations my Grandma decided these fences served no purpose to the people or the land and she needed to transform her seed dispersal role. She began the line of GG fairies, a true matriarch she is and that is how I'm here! So my role today as a GG fairy is to counter act this horrible system, the fences, the greed, money, slavery and oppression. We do this by whispers, we whisper into peoples ear to ignite something in them, so that they think about these food systems. Inspiring them to question it and start thinking outside of it. That is Step 1, Step 2 is them deciding to set up the garden. Step 3 is myself and other GG fairies and the people who see the truth and the horror, to care for the garden, the land and the people,

ensuring that food is free and those in community can get the food and love they need. So I'm very busy these days, tending to the veggies and flowers in the garden, whispering words of inspiration in your ears and resisting the fences.

Oh also before i finish the story it's important to also note that my grandma started this story long way from here. My mother brought me and our family to this land, across the sea. We came as we heard the fences were going up and it was far worse then you could ever had imagined. So we came to stand in resistance to the fences and try keep the food free here too. But our role on these lands is different to where my grandma practised and is from. It is different as we are living and flying and working on stolen land. We fight to resist settler colonial fences and laws here as well but we also fight with the First Peoples. For this is their land and they never gave it up. They have had their own ways of feeding the people and the land, quite different to that of my homelands but so ever strong. So today I'm whispering in peoples ears and inspiring resistance, but with knowledge and respect of the old ways, remembering the history still being played out on these lands and the ways Country is cared for here. There truely is so much to learn, so make sure you're trying your best to listen to these old people.

So I, Gibsy, the guerrilla garden fairy am here today living on stolen land, practising an art handed down from my grandma, fighting to free the food, and although very similar to my grandmas ways, not the same for there are other forces at play on these lands that I listen to.

I hope to see you in the garden soon....

Love Gibsy

Beegarden

Beegarden

Beegarden

Beegarden

Beegarden

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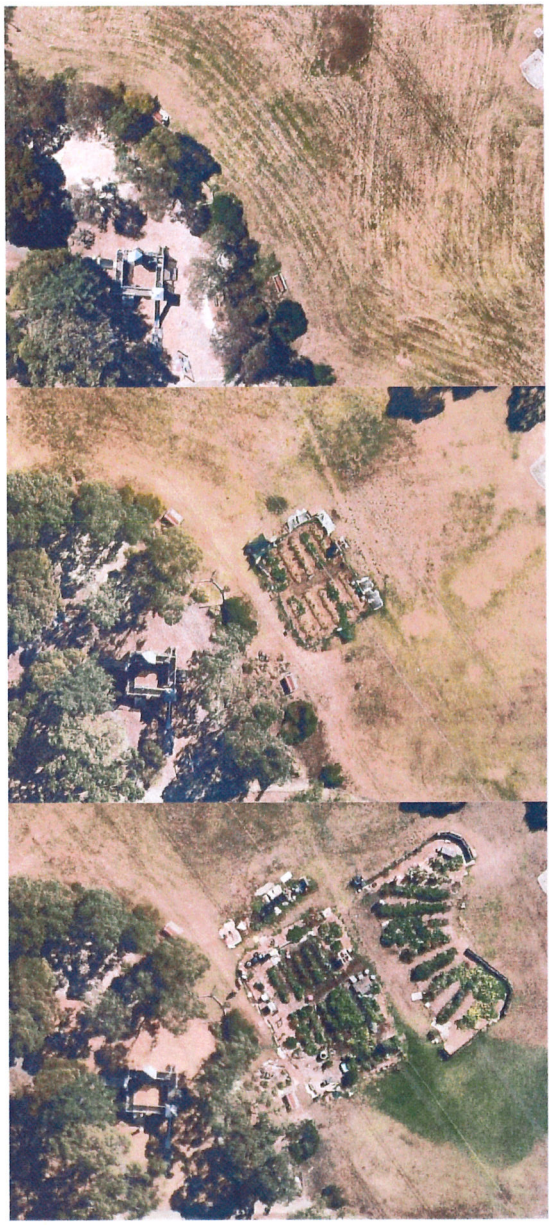
Beegarden

A series of photos of the growth of the radicle roots guerrilla garden.

Photos from the bridge and Satellite photos

From December 2023 to April 2025

- ZO



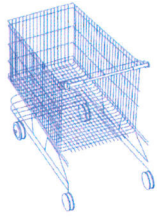
No Shop Trolley: A Guide

Anne Wagner Enzo Lara-Hamilton

What?!

a shopping trolley
timber
bed sheet
soil, compost

free (with effort!) salvage, scavenge, swap



mesh / chicken wire
seedlings/seeds
screws
pliers
drill
impact driver
hand saw or angle grinder

Where?!

supermarket
friends, community, neighbours
op shop
tool sheds
seed exchange libraries

Why?!

Food sovereignty.
Movable, avoiding pesky landlords
Free! If you can find sunny space.

How?!

Find all the ingredients :+)
Fold chicken wire into box within trolley.
Use the bed sheet as a liner for the box.
Sandwich or slide timber into trolley and screw together. Weatherboard if you're feeling fruity. Fill it up and roll into the sun!

Garden
Working Bee
August
11am
1pm
31st
Working Bee
07/09
Spring Gathering!
Picnic, propagation and planning
This Month In The Garden
WORKING BEES RADICAL ROOTS NAARM - COBURG
UNCEDED WURUNDJERI COUNTRY
EVERY 06 JULY - SHELTER DESIGN WORKSHOP
SATURDAY 13 JULY - PAINTING WORKSHOP
11AM 20 JULY - GATE MAKING WORKSHOP
27 JULY - CHAIR MAKING WORKSHOP
+ GENERAL GARDEN MAINTENACE
March work
8 Brassica propagation
15 Prep beds & netting
22 Prick out brassicas
29 Maintenance
Schedule
-November-
Fix up
23rd
Mosaic
Tidy up

Issue # 13
JAN/FEB 2024

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THE COBURG MEDDLER

IN THE WEEDS EDITION

A FERTILE PLOT

A Commons Project by 'Radicle Roots'

In the spirit of the 'Commons' – a concept relating to the collectively-organised and self-governed use of common land – a group of locals have reappropriated a patch of public land in Coburg's De Chene reserve, next to Bell st.

'Radicle Roots' (named after the the first part of a seed that develops roots) took inspiration from 'Growing Forward', a Brisbane-based group which has started several community gardens, growing food to support those who need it and as an attempt to move away from unsustainable food production methods. Growing Forward has three principles: nobody owns the garden, the food is free, and mistakes are welcome.

When the Meddler visited the Coburg garden on a recent Saturday, workers were sharing a garlic and lemon laden zucchini salad, which was made with the garden's first produce.

Two of the founders of the De Chene reserve garden told the Meddler that it's not just about growing food, but connecting people by growing things together, adding that every Saturday there were new and different faces. Amongst the regulars are burnt out activists, looking to connect with others by contributing to a tangible project, and those living in the nearby block of apartments on the corner of Bell St and Nicholson St.

[story continued page 3]

This newspaper was written and developed on Wurundjeri Land. Sovereignty has not been ceded. If possible, people should contribute to the Pay the Rent campaign. https://paytherent.

Printed on 100% recycled paper

[story continued from front page]

Some locals frequent the plot during the week; people who might be able to grow pot plants on their balconies, but don't have a place to garden.

Signs encourage the public to contribute in whatever way they like. On Saturdays there is a regular working bee from 10am-1pm, but it's always open.

The gardeners have been developing ideas on how a disparate group can communicate across the week, and are trialling a 'Garden Communication Book' – a diary that remains on the site - where people can let others know what they've done to the site and when. Tasks that need to be done can also be logged on a whiteboard next to the entrance, which helps provide a starting point for those who aren't sure how to contribute.

The location of the Coburg garden was carefully chosen to invite public participation, as well as to have access to a large open space with a source of water: "we looked for places people accidentally walk through on their way somewhere", said one of the founders.

The garden lies next to the park playground, is adjacent to a sports field (home of Brunswick Juventus FC), and close to two open air gyms and the Merri Creek trail. People and dogs regularly pass by the gardens as the working bee is in action, some of whom come up to find out what the garden is all about.

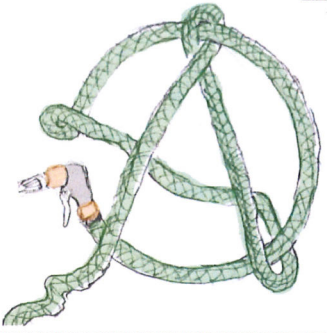
Unfortunately, these 'guerilla gardens' can be vulnerable to hostile community members. In QLD, this has led to some plots being vandalised by individuals or pulled down by Council.

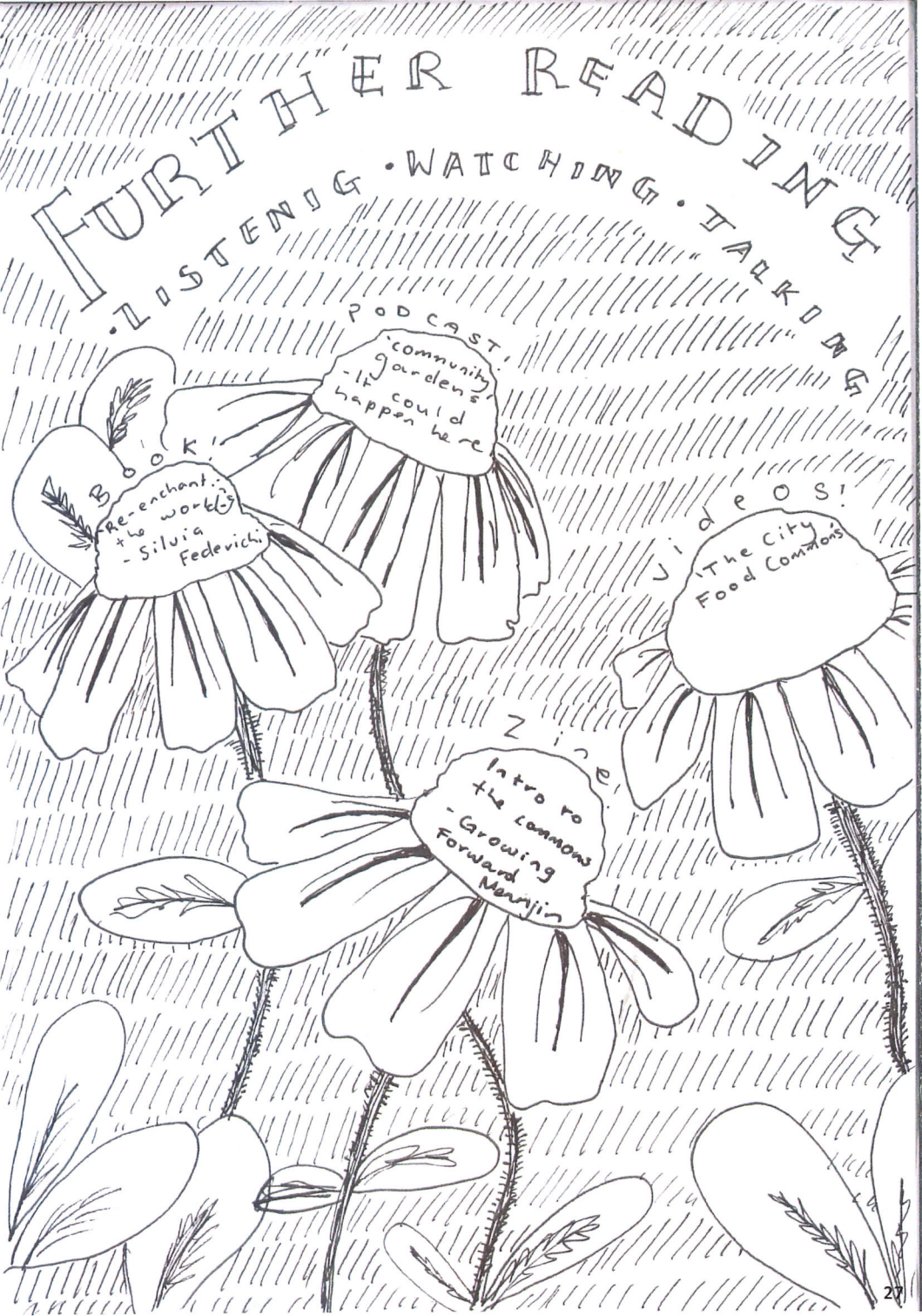
Similar concerns that Merri-bek council workers might rip up the De Chene garden were brought to the Council. Cr James Conlan added a motion about the garden to the next council agenda, which has the practical effect of keeping the garden safe from Council intervention until then.

The group has a number of plans, including linking up with local initiatives to donate some of the produce to those who need it.

Donate to their cause using this QR code.

By SS and BB




FURTHER READING
·LISTENING · WATCHING · TALKING
PODCAST:
'community gardens' - it could happen here
BOOK:
Re-enchanting the world - Silvia Federici
VIDEOS:
The City Food Commons
Zine:
Intro to the commons - Growing Forward Manifesto

Text:
8 Wurrungjeri Seasons in Melbourne
-Jim Poulter
Text:
Transforming Agriculture
-Common Ecologies
Book:
Governing the Commons
-Elinor Ostrom
Film:
Seed: The untold Story
Film:
Utopias - Landless workers movement Brazil.
-Henri Poulain
Essay:
Commoning & scarcity, a manifesto against capitalism
-Peter Gelderloos
Reclaiming the commons: Biodiversity, indigenous knowledge & the rights of mother earth
Vandana Shiva
Book:
Braiding Sweetgrass
-Robin Kimmer

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